

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 L-03 SS-15

SSO-00 SP-02 NSCE-00 PM-05 DODE-00 OMB-01 PA-01

ICAE-00 INRE-00 /052 W

-----030531 101827Z /50

O R 101701Z AUG 78

FM AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5970

INFO AMEMBASSY NASSAU

AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

C O N F I D E N T I A L BRIDGETOWN 2244

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, BB, US

SUBJ: BARBADOS NAVAL FACILITY NEGOTIATIONS--APPARENT LEAK OF
BARBADIAN POSITION

1. BOTH BRIDGETOWN NEWSPAPERS AUGUST 9 PUBLISH ARTICLES
QUOTING FROM THE STATEMENT MADE BY EXTERNAL AFFAIRS PERMANENT
SECRETARY ALGERNON SYMONDS AT A CLOSED SESSION WITH THE
AMERICAN NEGOTIATING TEAM ON THE FUTURE OF THE NAVAL FACILITY.
ACCORDING TO THE ADVOCATE NEWS THE TEXT WAS MADE AVAILABLE
TO THE PRESS BY THE GOVERNMENT INFORMATION SERVICE. THE
CARIBBEAN NEWS AGENCY AND REUTERS APPARENTLY ARE CARRYING
THE STORY. THE CANA VERSION APPEARS IN THE AUGUST 9 EDITION
OF THE "NATION". RADIO AND TV STATIONS ALSO CARRYING THESE REPORTS.

2. THE CANA REPORT STARTS BEGIN QUOTE THE
BARBADOS GOVERNMENT REVEALED LAST NIGHT THAT THE UNITED
STATES GOVERNMENT WAS OFFERING A MERE \$750,000 (US) AS RENT
FOR ITS MILITARY BASE IN THE ISLAND'S NORTHERNMOST PARISH OF
ST. LUCY.

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"AN OFFICIAL STATEMENT SAID BARBADOS HAD REJECTED
THE OFFER. THIS COUNTRY MADE CLEAR ITS POSITION AT
AN ABORTIVE MEETING OF SENIOR OFFICIALS ON JULY 27."
END QUOTE.

THE ADVOCATE NEWS STORY BEGINS
QUOTE

" BARBADOS HAS REJECTED ABOUT (BDS) \$1,500,000 FROM THE UNITED STATES AS RENT FOR THE CONTINUED USE OF THE ST. LUCY NAVAL FACILITY.

"THIS WAS DISCLOSED IN A STATEMENT BY PERMANENT SECRETARY IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, MR. ALGY SYMMONDS, JUST BEFORE HE PRESENTED A DRAFT AGREEMENT TO THE AMERICAN DELEGATION DURING TWO DAYS OF TALKS AT THE END OF LAST MONTH." END QUOTE.

BOTH PAPERS' ARTICLES CONTAIN EXTENSIVE QUOTES FROM SYMMONDS STATEMENT. THE ADVOCATE NEWS HAS ANOTHER FRONT PAGE STORY ALLEGING U.S. FAILED TO GIVE BARBADOS ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE PROMISED AT TIME NAVFAC AGREEMENT SIGNED. THIS ARTICLE ALSO, APPARENTLY, QUOTES FROM A SYMMONDS STATEMENT DURING NEGOTIATIONS.

3. THROUGHOUT THE DAY I ATTEMPTED TO OBTAIN THE TEXT OF THE RELEASE ALLEGEDLY MADE BY THE GOVERNMENT INFORMATION SERVICE. THUS FAR, WE HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO DO SO.

4. MY EFFORTS TO SPEAK WITH FOREIGN MINISTER FORDE OR PERMSEC SYMMONDS WERE UNSUCCESSFUL UNTIL MID-EVENING AUGUST 9. I TOLD FORDE THAT OF COURSE I WOULD HAVE TO REPORT THE PRESS ARTICLES. HOWEVER, BEFORE DOING SO I WANTED TO HAVE AN ACCURATE CONFIDENTIAL

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UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT SIGNAL THE GOVERNMENT OF BARBADOS INTENDED TO CONVEY THROUGH THE PUBLICATION OF THESE STORIES. THE ORDINARILY ARTICULATE FOREIGN MINISTER TO MY SURPRISE HALTINGLY TOLD ME THAT HE WAS UNAWARE OF THE PRESS REPORTS UNTIL LATE IN THE AFTERNOON. HE SAID NORMALLY BARBADOS WOULD NOT PUBLISH THE DETAILS OF A NEGOTIATION WHILE THEY WERE UNDERWAY. FORDE ALSO VOLUNTEERED TO ME THAT THE PRESS ARTICLES WERE TO BE A SUBJECT FOR DISCUSSION AT THE AUGUST 10 CABINET MEETING. THE IMPLICATION OF HIS STATEMENTS TO ME ARE THAT THE PRESS STORIES WERE UNAUTHORIZED LEAKS. THE MINISTER SAID THAT HE AND I WOULD BE TALKING LATER. EMBASSY PRESS OFFICER ALSO REPORTS THAT RELEASE WAS UNAUTHORIZED AND THAT FOREIGN OFFICE IS "UPSET."

5. WHETHER OR NOT THE RELEASE WAS INTENTIONAL THIS STORY CAUSED SOME CONSTERNATION NOT ONLY IN THIS EMBASSY BUT ELSEWHERE ON THE ISLAND PARTICULARLY IN THE BUSINESS AND FOREIGN COMMUNITIES. IN MY JUDGMENT IT WILL MAKE FUTURE NEGOTIATIONS ON THE NAVAL FACILITY MUCH MORE DIFFICULT AND THROWS

INTO SERIOUS DOUBT ANY POSSIBILITY OF AN EARLY SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION.
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Message Attributes

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Draft Date: 10 aug 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
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Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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